

the Republican leader and others to see if we might not agree tomorrow on a way to vote on the Cotton amendment and finish the bill.

As I have said earlier, 80 different Senators have important provisions in the bill. I know that. I know they are important because many of my colleagues went home over the last week and took credit for passing them, even though we have a little more work to do.

So while we have one difference of opinion left—and it is a big one—I think the majority leader has put us on a path to come to resolution by Wednesday, and I hope by tomorrow.

Let me conclude by thanking Senator FEINSTEIN. She feels as passionately about this as Senator COTTON does. Maybe she feels more passionately about it. I respect and understand that, but I also respect the fact that she and I are bringing the first appropriations bill to the floor, and it is our basic constitutional duty to do so. We haven't had an Energy and Water appropriations bill make it all the way across the floor under regular order since 2009. That is not the way the railroad is supposed to run around here. We need to show the American people that we can resolve our differences and come to a result, so we will do that. We will have a vote, and then we will finish the bill. I hope we can do it tomorrow.

I look forward to continuing my discussions with the Senator from California and other interested Senators to get it resolved.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to thank the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee for his views and for his very instructive actions to move this bill to fruition. I know we both think it is an important bill. We know the subject that Senator COTTON has raised is also important.

I think there has been a good discussion on it and understanding of the pros and cons, so I think now we can wait until Wednesday, an hour after we come in, for the vote, and we will see what the will of the Senate is.

I want the chairman to know I am very grateful for the actions he has taken because this is enabling us to pass the bill and see it enacted into law, we hope.

So thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, during our break, last Thursday the New York Times ran a story that was as heartrending and gut-wrenching as I have read in a long time. The headline was: "One Week in April, Four Toddlers Shot and Killed Themselves."

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, May 5, 2016]

ONE WEEK IN APRIL, FOUR TODDLERS SHOT
AND KILLED THEMSELVES

(By Jack Healy, Julie Bosman, Alan Blinder,
and Julie Turkewitz)

Kansas City, Mo.—Sha'Quille Kornegay, 2 years old, was buried in a pink coffin, her favorite doll by her side and a tiara strategically placed to hide the self-inflicted gunshot wound to her forehead.

She had been napping in bed with her father, Courtenay Block, late last month when she discovered the 9-millimeter handgun he often kept under his pillow in his Kansas City, Mo., home. It was equipped with a laser sight that lit up like the red lights on her cousins' sneakers. Mr. Block told the police he woke to see Sha'Quille by his bed, bleeding and crying, the gun at her feet. A bullet had pierced her skull.

In a country with more than 30,000 annual gun deaths, the smallest fingers on the trigger belong to children like Sha'Quille.

During a single week in April, four toddlers—Holston, Kiyan, Za'veon and Sha'Quille—shot and killed themselves, and a mother driving through Milwaukee was killed after her 2-year-old apparently picked up a gun that had slid out from under the driver's seat. It was a brutal stretch, even by the standards of researchers who track these shootings.

These are shooters who need help tying their shoelaces, too young sometimes to even say the word "gun," killed by their own curiosity.

They accidentally fire a parent's pistol while playing cops and robbers, while riding in a shopping cart, after finding it in the pocket of the coat their father forgot to wear to work. The gun that killed Sha'Quille last Thursday was pointing up, as if being inspected, when it fired.

They are the most maddening gun deaths in America. Last year, at least 30 people were killed in accidental shootings in which the shooter was 5 or younger, according to Everytown For Gun Safety, a gun control advocacy group that tracks these shootings, largely through news reports.

With shootings by preschoolers happening at a pace of about two per week, some of the victims were the youngsters' parents or siblings, but in many cases the children ended up taking their own lives.

"You can't call this a tragic accident," said Jean Peters Baker, the prosecutor of Jackson County, Mo., who is overseeing the criminal case in Sha'Quille's death. Her office charged Mr. Block, 24, with second-degree murder and child endangerment. "These are really preventable, and we're not willing to prevent them."

Gun control advocates say these deaths illustrate lethal gaps in gun safety laws. Some states require locked storage of guns or trigger locks to be sold with handguns. Others leave safety decisions largely to gun owners.

Twenty-seven states have laws that hold adults responsible for letting children have unsupervised access to guns, according to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, though experts say such measures have, at best, a small effect on reducing gun deaths. Massachusetts is the only state that requires gun owners to store their guns in a locked place, though it has not stopped youngsters there from accidentally killing themselves or other children.

Gun rights groups have long opposed these kinds of laws. They argue that trigger locks

can fail, that mandatory storage can put a gun out of reach in an emergency, and that such measures infringe on Second Amendment rights.

"It's clearly a tragedy, but it's not something that's widespread," said Larry Pratt, a spokesman and former executive director of Gun Owners of America. "To base public policy on occasional mishaps would be a grave mistake."

In Kansas City, Sha'Quille's family is trying to come to grips with her death and the murder charge facing Mr. Block. In interviews, several relatives said they did not believe he deserved to be convicted of felony murder, but some questioned his judgment in leaving a loaded gun out while he slept as well as his actions after he discovered that his daughter was grievously wounded.

According to court records, Mr. Block told the police that immediately after the shooting, he went to the bathroom, wrapped the gun in a shirt and put it into a vent in the floor. He then ran outside carrying his dying daughter and yelled for a neighbor to call for help. He was also charged with evidence tampering.

Sha'Quille's mother, Montorre Kornegay, said that she had recently separated from Mr. Block after more than five years together, but that they remained close. She said he loved the girl, whose first word was "Daddy." When he called Ms. Kornegay from jail, he told her he was sorry and talked about how much he missed Sha'Quille.

The girl was just 2, but wanted to be older, telling people she was already 5. She would run through the house, playing her own private game of peekaboo, relatives said. In a cacophony of squeaky children at home, relatives could always distinguish Sha'Quille's low, raspier voice. One day, she'll be a singer, they told one another.

"What happened was wrong," Ms. Kornegay said. She said that she did not think Mr. Block deserved to face a murder charge, but that he had behaved irresponsibly. "Why didn't you stay up and watch her?"

Parents, police officers and neighbors from Georgia to California are asking similar painful questions this week. Here are some of their stories.

'STAY WITH ME'

In 2015, there were at least 278 unintentional shootings at the hands of young children and teenagers, according to Everytown's database. During the week in April when Sha'Quille and the other children died, there were at least five other accidental shootings by children and teenagers. Alysee Defee, 13, was shot in the armpit with a 20-gauge shotgun she had used for turkey hunting in Floyd County, Ind. Zai Deshields, 4, pulled a handgun out of a backpack at her grandmother's home in Arlington, Tex., and shot her uncle in the leg.

A child who accidentally pulls the trigger is most likely to be 3 years old, the statistics show.

Holston Cole was 3, a boy crackling with energy who would wake before dawn, his pastor said. He loved singing "Jesus Loves Me" and bouncing inside the inflatable castle in his family's front yard in Dallas, Ga.

About 7 a.m. on April 26, he found a .380-caliber semiautomatic pistol in his father's backpack, according to investigators. The gun fired, and Holston's panicked father, David, called 911. Even before a dispatcher could speak, Mr. Cole wailed "No, no!" into the phone, according to a redacted recording.

Mr. Cole pleaded for his 3-year-old son to hold on until the ambulance could arrive: "Stay with me, Holston," he can be heard saying on a 911 tape, his voice full of desperation. "Can you hear me? Daddy loves you. Holston. Holston, please. Please."

Holston was pronounced dead that morning.

The local authorities have been weighing what can be a difficult decision for prosecutors and the police after these shootings: Whether to charge a stricken parent or family member with a crime. While laws vary among states, experts said decisions about prosecution hinge on the specific details and circumstances of each shooting. What may be criminal neglect in one child's death may be legally seen as a tragic mistake in another.

Officials with the Paulding County Sheriff's Office have suggested that they expect Mr. Cole to face, at most, a charge of reckless conduct.

"Anything that we do, criminally speaking, is not going to hold a candle to the pain that this family feels," said Sgt. Ashley Henson, a spokesman for the sheriff's office. Sergeant Henson said investigators had sensed early on that the shooting was accidental. "You want to be able to protect your family and take care of your family, but on the same hand, you've got to be safe with your weapons," he said.

Some gun control groups have urged states and district attorneys to prosecute such cases more aggressively, saying that, grief aside, people need to be held responsible for what are easily preventable deaths.

Brent Moxey, the pastor who officiated at Holston's funeral, said the boy's father was already haunted. "I think he runs the scenario over and over and over in his mind." Mr. Moxey said the family—which did not respond to a message left at their home seeking comment—was still asking for privacy.

About 1,000 mourners attended Holston's funeral on April 30, remembering a boy who loved superheroes and would sometimes wrestle cardboard boxes. The day he died, he spent time alongside his mother, Haley, as she read the Bible, playing with the highlighter pen she used to note passages, Mr. Moxey said.

"This little boy loved to tinker and to play, and he loved to get into things," Mr. Moxey said, describing the very impulse that probably led to Holston's death. "He loved to figure out how stuff works."

A RINGING PURSE

In Indianapolis, Kanisha Shelton would stay protectively near her 2-year-old son, Kiyan, watchful of the stray dogs known to roam through the neighborhood.

But on the night of April 20, Ms. Shelton stepped away from the boy, leaving him in the kitchen while she was upstairs. She had placed her purse out of his reach on the kitchen counter, but when her phone started ringing, the boy apparently pushed a chair close to the counter, climbed onto it and reached for the purse, according to an account from a cousin, John Pearson. There was also a .380-caliber Bersa pistol in it.

Just after 9 p.m., Ms. Shelton heard a loud bang and rushed downstairs. There, in the kitchen, she found Kiyan lying on the floor, bleeding from a gunshot wound to the chest. He was rushed to a local children's hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Ms. Shelton's mother, who answered her daughter's cellphone, said the family did not want to speak about the death. No criminal charges have been filed.

The police in Indianapolis said such scenes were becoming more common. "The mother was obviously very shaken up," Capt. Richard Riddle said. Indeed, on Sunday night, another child, 10 years old, died in what the police say appears to have been another accidental shooting.

A 2013 investigation by The New York Times of children killed with firearms found that accidental shootings like these were being vastly undercounted by official tabulations, and were occurring about twice as often as records said.

Dr. Garen J. Wintemute, an emergency physician and a researcher at the University of California, Davis, who studies the public health effects of gun violence, said that nearly everyone—from toddlers to adults—can fail to accurately distinguish toy guns from real guns, loaded guns from unloaded ones.

"That doesn't stop them from playing with it," he said.

Mr. Pearson said he sympathized with Ms. Shelton and thought of Kiyan's death as a tragic accident. "It was up on the counter, so I do think she thought she put the gun away, out of the baby's reach," Mr. Pearson said. "She's going to be in a living hell."

Essie Jones, who lives across the street, said Ms. Shelton had recently taught Kiyan to ride a small bicycle with training wheels, guiding him on the bike in the driveway. "They'd be up in the yard playing," she said. "He was very happy."

In a condolence book online, Dianna Mitchell-Wright, who identified herself as "Auntie," wrote of her anguish over losing the boy she had nicknamed "My Main Man." "All I have are memories," she said, "and your pictures in my cellphone."

ANGUISHED GOODBYES

The coffin that held Za'veon was no bigger than a piece of carry-on luggage, and it was so light that two pallbearers easily carried it through the packed St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Bermuda, La.

His full name was Za'veon Amari Williams, but to his family in Natchitoches, the 3-year-old was known as Baby Zee. On April 22, he found a pistol and shot himself in the head, according to Detective John Greely of the Natchitoches Police Department. When paramedics arrived, they found the mother cradling the boy and crying that he was not breathing, according to KSLA News 12.

The police arrested a companion of the mother, Alverious Demars, 22, on charges of negligent homicide and obstruction of justice. Detective Greely said that the police believed that the pistol belonged to Mr. Demars, and that he hid it after the toddler shot himself. The police have not found the weapon.

"As a responsible adult it's his obligation to secure that—to make sure a child does not get hold of it," Detective Greely said, explaining why Mr. Demars had been arrested.

The family declined to speak, but in a Facebook post, the boy's mother, Destiny Williams, wrote that she had not been able to sleep and was a "useless sad waste." "I can't take life," she wrote. "Why is it so cruel and unrelenting and unforgiving?"

The funerals for these children were filled with a similar anguish.

At the funeral for Baby Zee, the wails and screams grew so loud during a final moment of goodbye that ushers closed the church doors to give the family privacy. In Georgia, Holston's father tearfully read a letter that reflected on how the family used to sing "Jesus Loves Me." At the Kansas City funeral for Sha'Quille, family members crumpled as they looked into the coffin, shaking with tears or kissing her.

The day after Sha'Quille was buried, her maternal grandmother, Pamala Kornegay, reflected on the girl who was missing from the cluster of grandchildren who sat coloring on her living room floor. Ms. Kornegay said she was not angry with Sha'Quille's father.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the article included harrowing stories like this one:

Sha'Quille Kornegay, 2 years old, was buried in a pink coffin, her favorite doll by her side and a tiara strategically placed to hide the self-inflicted gunshot wound to her forehead. She had been napping in bed with her father late last month when she discovered the 9-millimeter handgun he often kept

under his pillow in his Kansas City, Missouri home. It was equipped with a laser sight that lit up like the red lights on her cousins' sneakers. Her father told the police he woke to see Sha'Quille by his bed, bleeding and crying, the gun at her feet. A bullet had pierced her skull.

On the night of April 20th, Kanisha Shelton had placed her purse out of her 2-year-old son Kiyan's reach on the kitchen counter, but when her phone started ringing, the boy apparently pushed a chair close to the counter, climbed onto it and reached for the purse. There was also a .380-caliber Beretta pistol in it. Just after 9 p.m., Ms. Shelton heard a loud bang and rushed downstairs. There, in the kitchen, she found Kiyan lying on the floor, bleeding from a gunshot wound to the chest. The police in Indianapolis said such scenes were becoming more common.

As someone who has advocated for commonsense protections against gun violence for decades and now as a Senator from Connecticut, where we know all too well the horrors of gun violence and the deep wounds and death they can wreak on innocent children, and especially as a parent of four children who have been those ages, these stories, for me, are truly heartrending and gut-wrenching. My heart goes out to the families of these children and the families of countless other children who were lost as a result of these gun deaths—too many such families too often and so many of them preventable.

Last year, there were 278 unintentional shootings by young children or teenagers, most of them having no idea what they were doing. In the week at the end of this April when four toddlers shot themselves, at least five other children and teenagers accidentally shot themselves or other people.

In-depth investigations have strongly suggested that these shootings are significantly undercounted because of differing rules across the country and jurisdictions about how such deaths are to be reported. Some areas designate any death in which one person shoots another as a homicide, even if the shooter is 2 years old and has no intent to kill.

The gun lobby relies on these misleading statistics to oppose laws that could reduce and prevent these kinds of heart-wrenching stories and deaths, such as safe storage laws or technology such as trigger locks. How could they be opposed? The gun lobby argues that these deaths are vanishingly rare, outpaced by other causes of child mortality. Of course, they perpetuate the misinformation by continuing to oppose any research, any fact-finding into gun violence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, continuing to even block our ability to better understand the problem, let alone address it.

I continue to have great difficulty understanding the anti-safety advocacy of these groups. Time and again in American history we have recognized that products posing a risk to consumers—particularly to children—require regulation to make them as safe

as possible, no matter what the product, no matter what the industry. That has been the American way. We put seatbelts in cars and require drivers to learn what they are doing in obtaining a license. We put childproof caps on medicine bottles and dangerous household products, even if they have domestic uses. If we have taken concrete steps to ensure that children can't open a bottle of aspirin, I am baffled that we can't do more to prevent these violent deaths. Why aren't we doing everything we can to make sure that children can't kill themselves or others or injure themselves or others with firearms?

There is no lack of ideas for how to remedy this situation. President Obama recently announced that as part of the White House's anti-gun violence initiative, he will move forward to promote the development of smart gun technology which is designed to ensure that no one except the owner can fire it. Even if the gun makes it into the hands of someone who should not have it, whether a child or a criminal, the gun will not be accessible. Like other steps the President has outlined in the absence of congressional action which remains sorely needed, this smart gun initiative utilizes existing laws and resources to challenge research, innovation, and enforcement toward more effectively cutting down on gun violence. Surely, we have a consensus among the American people, among gun owners, and among anybody belonging to groups that seemingly oppose these commonsense measures that we need to do more and do it better to prevent these child deaths.

On smart guns in particular, the White House will provide guidance for enhancing safety technology and help to manufacture and test smart firearms and to facilitate their purchase by State and local governments. Working in partnership with private sector innovators and local jurisdictions, this initiative holds tremendous promise.

Even while smart guns that depend on advanced technology are being developed, existing mechanisms provide remedies as well—low-tech remedies. Trigger locks and indicators of whether a gun is loaded are in widespread use today. Studies have suggested that a third of accidental deaths could be prevented by the use of childproof safety locks and loading indicators. Our laws should encourage and even require their adoption. States around the country have also developed a variety of safe storage bills that prohibit storing firearms in places that are accessible to children. Tragic experience has shown us that, as important as it is for families to discuss guns with their children, simply admonishing them to avoid going near guns won't work, particularly when the children are too young to understand what guns are and what they can do, and, most especially, when they are playing with other children in other families' homes, where those guns may be accessible and loaded.

The answer is to insist that adults take responsibility. They need to be

held responsible for keeping firearms off limits, which is really the only realistic option to cut down these tragic deaths of children.

Laws requiring that kind of responsibility and accountability are supported by two-thirds of Americans. Unfortunately, the gun lobby has continually, constantly, insistently, and consistently opposed progress in these areas. Their steadfast opposition has also prevented the Consumer Product Safety Commission—which has a praiseworthy track record of success keeping children safe from hazards and ranging from lead in toys to dangerous cribs—from regulating firearms or even issuing guidance about how they could be designed more safely for children.

I have been coming to the floor of the Senate for a number of years to speak about the need for legislation to address the gun violence epidemic in this country, clearly a public health crisis. If there were a flu epidemic or another kind of contagious disease causing 30,000 deaths a year, we would have urgent, drastic action. We need to do the right thing. There are stories reported such as those last week of the unspeakable horror of a child too young to understand what is happening who encounters a gun and uses it, such as Sha'Quille, Kiyan, and Holston Cole, a 3-year-old boy with crackling energy, who would wake right before dawn. His pastor said: He loved singing "Jesus Loves Me." He put a gun to his head and, unknowingly, pulled the trigger. We can avoid that type of tragedy. We can do better, and we must act.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

REMEMBERING CONRAD BURNS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, last week the world and the Burns family lost Senator Conrad Burns. There are thousands of reasons to celebrate the life of Senator Conrad Burns, but I will only mention a few, while I hope others write down their memories to help fill the void.

He made friends instantly and could quickly find a way to relate to anyone. He had a story for every situation. That is the most effective way to make a point. I particularly enjoyed his marital advice, which he learned in Hudson, WY. His stories always had a location and a person. He said Hudson is where he spent a week one day—but it is where he bet a friend \$100 that his wife Phyllis could beat his friend's wife in a foot race. He wasn't able to talk Phyllis into racing, but fortunately, the friend must not have had any luck with his wife, either, as he didn't show up.

While Conrad was a consummate, effective Senator, his love for his faith, his family, and friends made him special. He was a man who lived by example. He was willing to share about his life to help with our lives. He mentored me and many others with his plain speaking, and timely, sort of abrupt

suggestions. He didn't waste time or words, but he always had time to help.

He also probably never realized the difference he made. I know he never realized the difference he made daily while he worked on legislation, much of which he never got credit for but was effective at getting finished.

He had a special talent for speaking and presenting that always got people's attention. For example, he was able to take difficult issues involving telecommunications and make them understandable to his colleagues and hold their interest. That is an unmatched talent. He had a unique ability to sell ideas that came from his vast, real-life experience in agriculture, radio, and especially in auctioneering. He could get you to buy into his idea, and you didn't even realize that you had bid. His experience in small business gave him the ability to make people understand the kinds of decisions small businesses have to make—how many decisions, how far in advance they had to be made, and how critical that was to how well the United States does. His staff would occasionally suggest other words or phrases he might use after the fact. He recognized and made a case for the importance of small business as the engine of our economy.

Golf gave him an outlet for his frustration and provided relaxation and an opportunity for less stressful conversations. I am not a golfer, but Conrad always made the experience enjoyable and memorable.

His ability to sell is best noted when he auctioned a special Kenai handmade quilt and got \$15,000 when the best ever previous price was \$3,000. Incidentally, he made the \$3,000 quilt sale too.

By now, Conrad has had a chance to have a heart-to-heart talk—that is the only kind of talk you could have with Conrad, and especially in Heaven—with his daughter Kate, who passed away several years ago. I picture him playing golf in Heaven, where he is learning firsthand that some of those stories about clergy playing golf are true. I bet he even has a use for a saddle again and is still keeping up on the ag futures.

Conrad, you have been missed and will be missed as your memory reminds and inspires us. Your family is in our prayers as we grieve and celebrate your life along with them.

REMEMBERING BOB BENNETT

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, unfortunately, last week we also lost another former colleague, Senator Bob Bennett of Utah. There are 1,000 reasons to celebrate the life of Senator Bob Bennett, but I will only mention a few.

While he was the consummate effective Senator, his love for his faith, his family, and his friends really made him special. He was a man who lived by example. He was quiet but effective. He mentored me and many others by giving gentle, timely suggestions.